

In the Claims:

Please amend the claims as follows. Clean copies of the amended claims follow and a marked up version showing the changes to the claims is attached at the end of this Amendment.

Please cancel claim 2.

Please amend the claims to read as follows:

1. (Amended) A method for use in detecting the presence of a selected microscopic pathogen in a sample comprising:

(a) providing a substrate having a detection region thereon comprising a surface comprising microstructures including depressions of width and depth sized to align a liquid crystal material in contact therewith and wherein the depressions are of a size sufficient to be occupied by the selected pathogen;

(b) treating the surface of the detection region to provide a layer thereon that blocks non-specific binding of pathogens to the surface and that includes a binding agent that specifically binds the selected pathogen to be detected;

(c) applying a sample to be tested for the presence of the specific pathogen to the surface of the detection region of the substrate; and

(d) thereafter applying the liquid crystal material to the detection region that will be aligned by the microstructures on the surface of the substrate in the absence of binding of pathogen particles to the surface of the substrate, whereby the presence of the selected pathogen in the sample will be manifested by a visually observable disordering of the liquid crystal material caused by the pathogen particles bound to the substrate.

4. (Amended) The method of Claim 3, wherein the inorganic material is silver or gold and the method further comprises treating at least a portion of the silver or gold with a mercaptan or a disulfide.